

of Scottish kings, while far more had seen the flashing dark eyes, and thrilled to the magnetic eloquence of John Burns in Hyde Park or on Tower Hill. Indeed, John Burns, in his twenties and early thirties—he was born in 1859—was, with A J Balfour, the Tiger Lily of "resolute Government" in Ireland, Jo Chamberlain, the arch-priest of Birmingham Radicalism and Collective efficiency, and Charles Stewart Parnell, then moving swiftly towards his tragic end, among the most picturesque and challenging figures of the day. It was of them people talked, as the men of the future. There were, of course, those who pinned hopes, of a more sober kind, on the bright young lawyers beginning to be heard at Westminster, H H Asquith and R B Haldane, others, again, who behoved that Mill's mantle had descended upon the somewhat sloping shoulders of John Morley.

Few and far between were those who guessed that the most potent ferment for the future was actually being brewed, not by any of these, but by a small band of young men who, seeking no publicity and very largely concerned still with their own education, were assiduously creating, fostering and feeding nascent Socialism in London. As one of them was to say, many years later,

"We were young in those days and I suppose as eagerly presumptuous as young people ought to be. We spent what free time we had, after earning our daily bread, in leading and talking—in studying everything from blue-books to art, from history and politics to novels and poetry, and

perpetually
cussing and lecturing, among ourselves, and dis-
before anybody
who would listen to us "x

They not only talked restlessly they read,
they studied,
they observed, they ground their
minds against hard
facts, they amassed facts, they revelled m
them, and thus

¹ Preface to 1920 Edition, *Fabian Essays*, by Sidney
Wtbb